critical digest

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May 30, 1956 Vol VIII No 15 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter $25 yr. $6.50 quarter

This Week

Carmen Jones-City Center 5/31. NYC Light Opera Company revival of Oscar Hammerstein II musical based on opera. With Muriel Smith, Bill DuPree Jon White, Cozy Cole. Directed by William Hammerstein.

Ways of Love- Theatre East 5/31. 211 E 60. Trio Productions present 3 one act plays by Chekhov, Strindberg, and Ted Apstein. With Paula Dean.

Grand Guignol-Temple 5/31. 242 E 14. William Gyimes presents 4 short plays in Grand Guignol style. With Alan Ansara, Lissa Zabor.

Next Week

Comrades-Actors Playhouse 6/5...Mrs. Warren Profession-Davenport 6/5 ...Shangri La-W. Gard. 6/13...New Faces-Barrymore 6/14...By Hex-Tempo 6/19...Call of Duty -Provincetown 6/19...Aqu-show-Flushing 6/19.

Interview Hi-Lite

Tennessee Williams will produce his own Sweet Bird of Youth onBroadway, he told Peper, WT & S. Play may shock some, playwright thinks.

Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

The Littlest Revue-Phoenix- 5/22. Ben Bagley's new revue presented as final show of Phoenix term won only 2 mild pro votes from the NYC daily critics. Atkinson, Times, found it enjoyable evening at the hands of enjoyable people on stage. Performers are gifted, versatile and attractive young performers, adds Coleman, Mirror. Charlotte Rae, Larry Storch, Tammy Grimes, Joel Grey, Tommy Morton, Dorothy Jarnac, George Marcy and Beverly Bozeman are the principals. Remainder panned show lightly for not having enough entertainment for full evening. Of the cast, the dissenters liked best Miss Rae. Kerr, Herald Tribune, summed up feeling that there is just too little in show. Okay in spots, noted Chapman, Mirror, but half of the show could be thrown away. Inspite of some fine talents involved, Watts, Post, found it a little bit disappointing. Short on gaiety, looks and humor, panned Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun.

The Ivory Branch-Provincetown 5/24. Diana Barrymore's performance in Sara Reavin's new play presented byTSR Theatre Company was not held against her by the critics. They panned play and director. As a piece of literature, play is clap-trap, summed up Atkinson, Times. Performances under direction of Bill Whiting are a catalogue of cliches, though some of the acting is direct and forceful enough to overcome the direction. Play gets lost in plotting, notes Beckley, Herald Tribune. A weak melodrama, added Herridge, Post. Hawkins, WT&S, and Atkinson, both thought Barrymore showed future promise as a fine actress.

Three Times Three-Chanin 5/23. 122 E 42. Trio of 3 farces presented on 50th floor theatre of Chanin Bldg by Witcover-Lutz drew 2 con votes from Funke, Times, and Herridge, Post. Former okayed it for students only, but for average theatre fan thought it dull and stale. Both critics liked Shaw's "How He Lied to her Husband" but thought Morton 1847 skit and Heywood's Restoration play poor stuff. Cast of Charles Reilly, Anna Meara and Jerry Stiller were praised only for work in Shaw piece.

A possible black market in mail order sales of tickets to Broadway hits is being investigated by NYC Commissioner of Investigation Tenney. Reports contend that certain ticket brokers pay $3 per ticket to "mail order diggers" who write in for seats, and then re-sell the tickets at scalper's prices.

Plays

The Girls of Summer with Shelley Winters opens at the Longacre Nov 19 ... The Playboy of the Western World to be presented on Broadway next season by Rowena Stevens will star Farley Granger... A musical version of Outward Bound will be presented next spring after being seen on CBS-TV.

Players

Marjorie Steele will make her Broadway debut next month when she replaces Barbara Bel Geddes in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof... Pat Marshall's role in Mr. Wonderful taken by Kay Medford, T. J. Halligan joined cast of same show... Janet Paver will replace Florence Henderson, Fanny, who is leaving show in mid-June to have a baby... Claudia Morgan will appear in next season's The Apple Cart... Guy Kibbee, age 70, died.

Other Broadways

The Man With Golden Arm may move intact to Chicago's Studabaker Theatre... Revised Shangri-La opened in Philadelphia... O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night will be presented in London next season by Blevins Davis... Ruth Gordon will portray her role in The Matchmaker in Paris (in French) next year... Oslo celebrated Hendrik Ibsen Week marking 50th anniversary of writer's death.

Summer Playhouses

Lambertville, NJ, Music Circus opens June 2 with The King and I... Art Carney will tour in The Seven Year Itch this summer... The Lesser Comores, a new play by Albert Husson will debut at Bucks County, Pa. Playhouse, June 18... William Inge will stage the road company of his own Bus Stop, which opens in Chicago July 15... 12th edition of Aquashow opens June 19... Robert Butman named director of American Shakespeare Festival Academy for season ... Douglas Watson will portray title role of Henry V at Cambridge, Mass, Drama Festival July 5.

Award File

Enid Bagnold, author of The Chalk Garden won $1000 and the Award of Merit Medal of the American Academy and the National Institute of Arts and Letters... Winners of the Second Annual Vernon Rice Off Broadway Awards presented at Drama Desk were Circle in the Square, Jose Quintero, Pernell Roberts, and Janine Manitus. Beaufort, Christian Science Monitor, was elected president of the NY theatre reporters organization. Hewes, Saturday Review, and Hassan, Show Business, were elected vice-presidents. Calta, Times, and Kraus, Critical Digest, were re-elected treasurer and secretary.

TV Theatre Notes

Anna Maria Alberghetti will make her NY theatre debut next season repeating her Bell for Adano role to be seen on CBS TV June 2... NBC TV will present musical version of Jack and the Beanstalk on Broadway next season after its TV viewing.

Theatre Film Notes

4th St Theatre cast of Uncle Vanya spending afternoons working on film version being made by Parsonet Films, Cost is $350,000... Oedipus Rex to be filmed by Stratford, Ont, Players in Jan, Tyrone Guthrie directing.

GREEN ROOM DEPARTMENT

CHARLOT OBITS...Andre Charlot who died in Hollywood last week at age 74 did for the revue form of theatre what Rodgers and Hammerstein were later to do for the musical comedy, recalls Coleman, Mirror...His death from cancer closed out a career remarkable for its run of great fortune in earlier decades and the ill fortune which dogged it for the final 20 years. He produced more than 50 musical before and after World War I, Landry, Variety, notes. He was currently plannng another come-back with a Broadway production of Four Dolls on a Dime.

COLUMN TIPS...100 hopefuls line up for standing room admissions to My Fair Lady as early as 7 AM, reports Winchell...Reason for flop of Teahouse of August Moon in Brazil is that production was in Spanish, not Portuguese, reminds Walker.

SEASONAL REPORTS...No new native drama or comedy of really distinguished quality or new American dramatist of stature has emerged from what otherwise has been a fine theatre season, sums up Watts, Post...Even in so wonderful a theatre year, notes Chapman, News, backers more than than a million dollars on 4 musicals that flopped out of town, and the Playwrights Company and the Theatre Guild came up with sticky stuff which should have been abandoned. There is no doubt it has been a good season, News aisle-sitter, concludes, but the theatre isn't any better off than it ever was. It never will be.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...Some day an enterprising producer will see the advantages of catering to the lower and middle income groups and charge 25 cents to $2.50 per seat, suggests a Times reader...NYC City Center Theatre Company should plan a full season of drama, not just 2 eight week periods, urges a C.D. subscriber.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Despite the gifts as an actor displayed in King Lear and Magnicent Yankee, Louis Calhern tragically never quite reached the position in the theatre his talent deserved, comments Watts, Post...If the Lincoln Square theatre project ever gets to the cornerstone stage it could have a profound effect on the art of the theatre, predicts Atkinson, Times. The twin arts of playwrighting and performing could be notably enriched by the availability of a theatre equipped for flexible staging. ...Servants at best are the most beat-up crutches in the playwritng dodge, notes McClain, Journal American

PROS & CONS BY TMK

The Littlest Revue title sums up the proceedings completely. A group of pleasant people present some pleasant, little material. There isn't a show stopper tune, sketch or person in the carload.

The Man With the GoldenArm is a beautiful, fascinating theatre production. Paul Morrison's sets are the most outstanding item, but the large, able cast is close behind. Several of the scenes rate with the most exciting theatre presented On or Off Broadway this season, or any season.

OFF BROADWAY

Strindberg's Comrades will open June 5 at Actors Playhouse...Sophocles Theban Plays presented at John Hall Memorial Church House, 342 E 63... Robert Caesar, Ken Cantril and Wynne Miller to be leads in Tempo's By Hex due June 19...Professional Children's School opened building fund raising campaign with parent's show featuring Gypsy Rose Lee and Sammy Davis, Jr.

Pictures in the Hallway reading of O'Casey autobiographical works at YMHA was highly raised by Atkinson, Times. Givenfor 2 performances only, staging by Stuart Vaughan was termed forthright, and the performance extraordinarily inventive and moving. Staats Cotsworth, as narrator, read all his lines brillantly, critic noted. Pity that these wonderful readings have to disappear before they have fairly started.

THEATRE BOOK NOTES

"Sights and Spectacles: Theatre Chronicles 1937-56" by Mary McCarthy(Farrar Strauss) is a collection of stage criticisms written for Partisan Review. Author is sister of actor Kevin McCarthy and disapproves of type of play her brother appears in, Variety reviewer noted.

TV THEATRE COMMENTS

Barrie's The Old Lady Shows Her Medals with Gracie Fields, was given an excellent production on CBS TV Steel Hour, rated Shanley, Times. In less gifted hands it might have been maudlin and spiritless. But Theatre Guild production in just the proper key, had a great deal of charm.

OUT OF TOWN

Boston playing host to New Faces and Teahouse of August Moon, Chicgo viewing Bad Seed and Inherit the Wind...Damn Yankees camped in Cincinati, The Pajama Game in Detroit...Los Angeles fans seeing Silk Stockings and Anastasia, ..Shangri-La trying new wings in Philadelphia...Anniversary Waltz in San Francisco, The Boy Friend in Seattle.

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